DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 114 146 JC 750 579

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TITLE The Shape of Governance in the Future.
PUB DATE 75
NOTE 12p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (Seattle, Washington, April 13-16, 1975)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.76 HC-$1.58 Plus Postage
DESCRIPTORS Administrative Change; *Administrative Organization; Administrator Role; *Collective Bargaining; *College Faculty; Community Colleges; *Governance; Instructional Staff; *Junior Colleges; Teacher Administrator Relationship

ABSTRACT

Faculty members in most community colleges have occupied a less prestigious governing role than administrators. For the most part, instructional staff have had little say in personnel decisions, and only limited influence on curriculum and other academic matters. Compounding these problems has been the lack of professionally trained administrators. The future of governance in community colleges runs in at least two separate channels to a common future. First, faculty will become increasingly involved in formal collective bargaining. This is a healthy trend, since a fair contract, well administered, can provide a number of important advantages to administration and faculty alike. Second, since the steady state has produced a career faculty for community colleges, instructional staff will begin to exert increasing influence in decisions involving colleague selection; faculty retention, evaluation, and promotion; and academic reform. As a more professional faculty begins to assume greater responsibility for the educational program and for its implementation, professional administrators will be concerned more with defining their own contributions to the education process, and less with supervision and evaluation of their professional colleagues. (NHM)

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THE SHAPE OF GOVERNANCE IN THE FUTURE

Most observers of our institutions see them as a part of a historical continuum which extends into the remote past. The forces that have generated the issues we face today have since disappeared but the issues remain and our solutions to them will generate new forces and new issues calling for changed responses. Viewed from one perspective, the process through which the resolution of problems gives rise to new problems can be regarded as discouraging. From another perspective, it can only be described as reassuring. Administrators and problems are very much like preachers and sin. If you don't have one, you don't need the other.

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What is the history of the recent past of governance in community colleges? Let me sketch a number of observations. First, we have seen an abundance of autocratic and frequently arbitrary administrators. Those selected for administrative posts have regarded themselves endowed with a wisdom denied to lesser folds, in other words, the faculty. This egocentric view of their college communities has led administrators to value their judgments so highly that they seldom listen to faculty or students unless their statements agreed with what administrators wished to hear. Through fear, control of the system of rewards and penalties and control of the channels of communication, especially to the board of trustees, administrators have for the most part been able to achieve their priorities and to promote their values.

Faculty members in most community colleges have clearly occupied a less prestigious role than administrators. They have been evaluated by administrators, they have been recommended for promotion by administrators, they have been selected by administrators and their salary increases and

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tenure have been dependent upon their good relationships with their administrative supervisors. The lack of faculty involvement in personnel decisions has paralleled their limited influence on the curriculum and upon other academic matters. Many institutions have created numerous committees, all of which have been advisory to the president. The term, advisory, has been interpreted to mean that if these committees produced recommendations with which the president agreed, they would be accepted. If the committees produced recommendations with which the president disagreed, they would be ignored.

Innovation in community colleges has been another interesting phenomena. We have had more than our quota of bright and brittle young men who have flitted from institution to institution, sprinkling the magic dust of innovation and then moving on before the human consequences of their innovations became fully apparent. We have read of recommendations for a Vice President for Heresy. The implication here is quite clear. If you don't have an administrator who has innovation written into his job description, the clods on the faculty are going to continue existing practices ad infinitum.

Compounding these problems has been the lack of professionally trained administrators. While a few of our universities were preparing community college administrators as far back as the 1950's, the first real impetus for professionally trained administrators came in the early 60's under the sponsorship of the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. While involvement in a program designed to prepare professional college administrators has by no means been a guarantee that one would have the qualifications necessary

to be a professional administrator, at least a case can be made that it is better to try and fail than not to try at all. The absence of professionally trained administrators had led to one final problem that deserves mention, and that is the over-involved trustee. Some of the most bizarre advice currently available can be obtained from trustees who have become expert at dealing with unusual problems which they have helped create through a lack of understanding of complex organizations, combined with weak and ineffective administrative leadership.

As we look to the future of governance in our colleges, we can observe at least two separate channels to a common future. Some of us have already been swept into the turbulent waters of formal collective bargaining. I can sympathize with those who are paddling like hell to stay afloat in the collective bargaining stream. I can understand those who have chosen the less spectacular but equally productive route of participative governance. The people I really can't understand are those who haven't yet made a choice in the hope that coercion, fear and rewards can continue to support the fading mode of administrative domination.

From my perspective, the reforms that are necessary as a consequence of some of the inequities that have been a part of our past are most likely to be resolved through the collective bargaining channel. I do not believe that collective bargaining is in any way inappropriate for colleges. I have no fear of faculty members overwhelming administrators or boards of trustees, but neither do I see collective bargaining as the panacea it is sometimes described by the growing class of faculty union bureaucrats. Conflict is a normal part of the life of any organization. Most of us have have been taught, as administrators, that it is our job to promote consensus.

Consequently, when conflict emerges we feel guilty and we try to suppress it. Collective bargaining is a healthy, decision making process for dealing with conflict. By refusing to accept collective bargaining as a normal decision making process, we force faculty unions into the position of refusing to accept consensus procedures as a normal way for dealing with those areas of decision making where adversarial relationships are not necessary.

Collective bargaining should be a procedure through which decisions are reached that are fair to both faculty and management. Professional negotiators can afford to concentrate on winning at the table because they don't have to live with the results in terms of the institutional relationships that evolve under the terms of a poor contract. A fair contract that is well administered can provide a number of important advantages both to administration and to faculty. The poor contract, or the poorly administered contract places intolerable pressure on administration. Regardless of how one-sided a contract may be, it is almost certain that it will include a grievance procedure. Through use of the grievance procedure it becomes possible for faculty to expose the inequities and the lack of good judgment which the non-professional administrator often displays. This is particularly true within state systems where contracts are negotiated under the influence of a central administrative office. Normally the third or fourth step of the grievance procedure will result in the necessity of the state board hearing the details of some very messy situations. Given the fact that it is not uncommon for 15 to 30 grievances a year to be filed during the first two years of a contract, a state board and state

administration can find itself in the position of being forced to deal with a lot of issues it never knew existed previously. Hence my first prediction. I believe that unfair or poorly administered contracts will result in the exodus of a lot of existing administrators. So those of you who come to these conventions looking for presidential vacancies take faith. There is little question but that the number available is not likely to decrease.

I do expect, though, that as we gain more experience with collective bargaining the number of fair contracts that are negotiated will increase. I see some significant consequences of these contracts. First, I believe that the role of faculty members in curriculum and instruction will be greatly strengthened. I see this as a very positive development. We are no longer building 50 new community colleges each year, nor are we faced with the prospect of increasing our existing staff by 30-40%. With stability has come the opportunity for faculty and administrators to work together to strengthen the programs we offer and the quality of our instruction. It should be apparent to even the most chauvinistic of community college advocates that it is one thing to describe a community college as an institution that values excellence in teaching, and quite another to achieve such excellence under the circumstances that were imposed on us by the rapid expansion of the 60's.

It is increasingly evident, too, that faculty members in all but the worst of our community colleges no longer see these institutions as stepping stones to a job at a four year college or university. The steady state has produced a career faculty for community colleges for the first

time. A career faculty will not be responsive to administratively dominated innovation, nor will a career faculty be content to permit the personnel decisions that effect their lives to be made solely by administrators.

Thus I see increasing faculty influence in decisions involving the selection of their colleagues, faculty retention, faculty evaluation, and promotion. Frankly, I view this also as a most constructive step. I believe the time has come for administrators to stop spending most of their time supervising faculty members, evaluating faculty members, and documenting this supervision and evaluation with reams of paper which proves nothing except the ability of administrators to write. I have read about and observed numerous schemes for evaluating faculty by administrators. I have yet to see any of these arrangements produce results that justify the cost and nuisance that is involved in implementing them.

To this point I have talked primarily about changes that will affect faculty and administration. I do see a more professional faculty, assuming greater responsibility for the educational program and for its implementation. I do see a professional administration, concerned more with defining its own contributions to the educational process and less with supervision and evaluation of their professional colleagues. The question most frequently raised is "what about the students?" The bargaining table has only two sides, and students sit at neither. I believe a secure faculty, freed from paranoia about administrators will be more responsive to students than they have been in the past. There are already examples where student

pressures have led faculty to negotiate student involvement on curriculum committees and student evaluation of faculty members to be used in making personnel decisions.

Of course a professionally competent and reasonably secure administrative staff will, by its own practices, make exclusion of students from the decision making process intolerable. It is quite apparent that if administrators treat students as equal partners in the educational process, it will be extremely difficult for faculty members to support the kind of attitudes that are frequently displayed at present. In this regard, when you go back to your home institutions, may I urge you to examine the implications of your practices for students. I have been in colleges where the rest rooms are labeled Faculty Men Only, or Faculty Women Only. Consider the implications of this type of practice for the self-image of our students. Consider also, that image building is one of the major goals and major problems of the community college.

Finally, I believe that collective bargaining will have the effect of reducing random behavior by trustees. The nature of our community colleges are such that our trustees are in constant contact with students and faculty. In the past it has not been unusual for a trustee to call a president and attempt to intervene directly in a situation involving a matter of academic freedom or personal privacy. This process will become much more difficult under a collective bargaining agreement which provides for the redress of violations of academic freedom as well as due process in personnel issues. I do not believe it was ever intended that trustees of community colleges should become the dominant force in decision making.

The use of lay boards has evolved as a device for keeping our institutions responsive to the social order out of which they grew. It also provides a mechanism for accountability and advocacy. The lay board must recognize its limitations as well as its strengths. I believe that collective bargaining will help to force such recognition where it has not already occurred.

A more limited number of institutions will make the kinds of changes that I have suggested without the polarization and the formalization which is a consequence of collective bargaining. There will be certain characteristics of those institutions that are able to make participative governance work. Such institutions will, as a minimum, establish the following conditions.

First, they will work out with their faculty, personnel policies related to selection, retention, promotion, the granting of salary increments and tenure. Such personnel policies will be equitable and will ensure a considerable measure of faculty involvement in making the decisions that affect them. These personnel policies will include a grievance procedure with binding arbitration so that unfair decisions, either real or imagined, can be appealed to a neutral third party beyond the board of trustees. These equitable personnel policies, combined with the grievance procedure, will be legally protected in such a way that they cannot be changed arbitrarily by the board of trustees without advanced consultation with the faculty.

Second, those institutions which do not go through the process of formal organization will make arrangements to negotiate with their faculty on economic matters through the establishment of policies similar to those used for the resolution of conflict under collective bargaining. The

characteristics of human beings are such that it is unrealistic to expect that faculty members will ever believe that they are being paid a sufficiently high salary or that board members will ever believe that faculty members are worth what they are being paid. Regardless of the consensus that may exist in other areas of the institution, there will always be conflict on this particular matter. It follows, therefore, that the institution must have a procedure for addressing this issue. Any viable approach will have to establish impasse procedures including mediation, fact-finding and arbitration, so that faculty members will be assured that they are not being co-opted into the position of being forced to accept a board decision without the kind of recourse that will be available to their colleagues in institutions that have chosen to organize formally and to affiliate with an external union.

I don't see any possibility of state systems taking the participative approach as opposed to the collective bargaining approach toward more faculty involvement in matters related to governance. State systems, by their very nature, are large formal bureaucracies which can only be dealt with successfully by other large formal bureaucracies. The significant decisions in state systems will increasingly be made at the state level. I see no possible way that faculty members can "buy a piece of the action" at the state level without formal organization.

While collective bargaining is not yet a consideration in some areas of our nation, approximately half of the states have either passed collective bargaining legislation or permit collective bargaining because they do not prohibit it. As faculty unions gain political influence they

will turn their efforts for collective bargaining legislation from the state to the national level. I would suspect that it is only a matter of time until we have a national collective bargaining law. Again I would add I don't think that is bad. It will only be bad for those institutions which can't make up their minds about which direction to paddle, and as I have previously stated, those places are likely to have new helmsmen before too long under any circumstances.

The shape of governance for the future, then, involves significantly changed roles for administration and for faculty. The shape of that future is already clear in the form of the contracts that have been negotiated by those institutions that have had five years of experience or more under this form of decision making. It is also becoming increasingly clear in those institutions that have chosen to move toward participative governance as an alternative to collective bargaining. I cannot help but comment that changing the structure and establishing a faculty senate, while key administrators continue to behave precisely as they did before is not moving toward participative governance. It's simply shifting the paddle from one hand to the other without making up your mind about which direction you want to go.

Collective bargaining is not inevitable in the future of all of our institutions but it is highly probable. Its results will be more beneficial than harmful. I draw this conclusion because I have seen for many years the impact on faculties and students of extremely autocratic administration. I have observed the repressive atmosphere of institutions where people have been afraid to take advantage of the academic freedom that should be a part of our heritage because of the reprisals that had occurred from

either administrative or board action. I cannot understand how anyone can believe that diminishing the importance or the self-image of any faculty member or any student in any institution can enhance the effectiveness of that institution or its image as an institution of higher education. The unvarnished truth of the matter is that anything that diminishes any one of our professional colleagues diminishes us. We cannot increase our status at the expense of reducing theirs. Community colleges have suffered from image problems. That image problem has been due in no small measure to the deliberate attempt of administrators to repress faculty activity as practicing professionals.

The reverse of this is true also, and unions will discover this in due time. It is not possible to diminish or displace effective administrators without diminishing the institution as a whole. We must learn to work together and we can accomplish that under collective bargaining as effectively as we can under participative governance. The issue is the effectiveness of our enterprise and the quality of the services we deliver. To compete effectively in the marketplace of higher education we will need to resolve our conflict as equitably as possible and move on to the tasks at hand. The shape of how this is done will not vary greatly whether an institution chooses to follow participative governance or to become involved in collective bargaining. We do need to be sure that each approach is informed by the successes and failures of the other.

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